News-Pages of the GSWC

The Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County, Michigan, Inc. 5 October 2021
To Accompany *Family History Capers* Vol. 45 #1

GSWC Meetings are usually held at 1:30 p.m. on the fourth Sunday of the month, September to May (unless a holiday interferes). Currently we are meeting via Zoom for the health and safety of our members. We are asking everyone to register ahead of time to assist with tracking attendance. **Check our website for information about registering or changes in venue:** https://www.washtenawgenealogy.org. or our **Facebook page** located at: https://www.facebook.com/genealogywashtenaw.

Upcoming Meetings: Sunday, October 24, 1:30–4 p.m. on Zoom. Josh Taylor (PBS's Genealogy Roadshow, President of the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society) will present "**Hidden Gems: Materials in Digital Libraries for Family Historians."** (GSWC member) Sharon Sachs will address **"Capturing and Analyzing Documented Facts in Preparation of Telling Family Stories."**

Sunday, December 5, 1:30–4 p.m. on Zoom. Kris Rzepczynski (Senior Archivist, Archives of Michigan) will present a double-header, **"Digital News: Genealogical Research in Online Newspapers"** and **"Perilous Assumptions: Revisiting Those First Finds."**

GSWC meetings are held on Zoom and open to the public; pre-registration is required. For non-members, please email to request an invitation to register info@washtenawgenealogy.org no less than three days before the event. There is a brief membership meeting before the first speaker and a break between speakers.

Report on Recent Meetings:

September 26, 2021: "Beyond Dry Facts: Telling Your Ancestor's Stories" by Laura Hedgecock. Ms. Hedgecock began by sharing why these stories matter and how the writing of them helped her connect with her grandmother.

Ms. Hedgecock discussed various strategies to help an individual write compelling and relatable stories about a person's ancestors. For each strategy, she provided several suggestions on how to effectively use them.

Key points included:

- Getting started
- From researcher to writer
- What makes a story compelling?
- Types and sources of context

Her presentation covered all facets of what a person would encounter to author stories about their ancestors.

Additional questions can be sent to Ms. Hedgecock at: Laura@Laura.Hedgecock.com
She also has a website at:
www.TreasureChestofMemories.com

by Janet Gilkey

Class: "Land Patents Records & Bureau of Land Management Website" by Annette Baker. GSWC Member Annette Baker offered to share her knowledge with us on Land Patent records. She has many Ypsilanti surnames in her family. Among them are King, Palmer, Pease, Post, and Childs.

She began with the Government Land Office Records, often referred to as the GLO. The website is https://glorecords.blm.gov. This is the home page of the US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office Records. One of the items you are seeking here is the **township, range, and section** of land your ancestors owned. Note that only the thirty Federal Land States are found here. There are definitions on this home page of "land patents" and "tract books" and other terms. You can search by type, location, or identifier. She started with location, and then added a surname. You can see the patent details, patent images or related documents.

The BLM-GLO land patent index only lists people who were actually granted a federal land patent. U.S. federal tract books contain the official record of each parcel of public land until it was transferred from federal to private ownership, including successful and unsuccessful claims. Armed with the township number, range, and section the next step is to find the **tract book volume number** using the FamilySearch website:

https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United_States,_Bureau_of_Land_Management_Tract_Books_Coverage_Table_-_FamilySearch_Historical_Records . The tract books are listed by state. The township and range are not exactly in number order, search around for your specific location and note the tract book volume number.

Once you identify which tract book volume contains the correct township and range, you need to go to the **tract book** itself which can be found at: https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United_States,_Bureau_of_Land_Management_Tract_Books_-_FamilySearch_Historical_Records. You will need to sign in to FamilySearch to proceed. It is free to sign up. Then, go down to the "To Browse This Collection" section about 1/3 of the way down the page. The images are arranged by township and range up at the top of the page, but not as logically as you might think. Try sampling images until you get close to the one you seek. Remember this is allowing you to search from home, and you don't have to worry about the library closing hours!

To learn more about land patents see the wiki: https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Land_Patent_Search. This page includes a map of the Federal Land Grant states.

by Marcia McCrary

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GSWC Items:

Notes from the Board:

The next **GSWC Board Meeting** is Tuesday, Oct. 12, 2021 from 2 to 4 p.m., via Zoom. For more information on the agenda and how to attend, send an email to Nancy Howard: president@washtenawgenealogy.org.

Volunteer Opportunities:

1. **Librarian**
2. **News-Pages Editor**
3. **Capers Editorial Team**
4. **Technical Support**

email: president@washtenawgenealogy.org

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The **DNA Special Interest Group** will meet next on October 21 from 2 to 4 p.m. on Zoom. Contact Rodger Wolf, rawolf@umich.edu.

The **German Special Interest Group** will meet on November 2, 2021 at 2 p.m. via Zoom. Contact Mike Gerding via GermanSIG@comcast.net for more information.

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I have to share an "aha" moment that our Board had recently. A few months ago, we were made aware of the Allyship movement. Board members were encouraged to participate in their choice of several ways to learn what Allyship is and where or how it relates to our genealogical society. At first, I was fearful that this might be well-intended but privileged people devising fixes for how to solve inequality. I am (we are) firmly committed to inclusiveness and diversity in our organization (and the world, for that matter) but the idea of imposing a program that did not focus on genealogy was worrisome. After researching the goals and practices of Allyship, I followed my first instinct and called Omer Jean Winborn, a long-time GSWC Board member (of African American descent), and shared my dilemma with her. Omer Jean spoke about an opportunity for genealogical societies everywhere to help discover information about enslaved ancestors. She recently encountered someone who had found, to their dismay, that her ancestors were slave owners. Rather than hiding this fact away, she shared family records with Omer Jean. Some of the documents included names and descriptions that would not be found elsewhere. Although some of the information revealed was painful (selling an 18-month old baby for $1400) it can also be healing. Lightbulbs went off over our Board members' heads at that meeting. We had one of the best discussions we've had in a while. Surely some of our 300 members are likely to have ancestors who owned slaves. Perhaps they would be willing to share family records or documents they have come across that might contain information about the enslaved people. This could be a good start for a broader movement among genealogical and historical societies.

Nancy Howard, GSWC President

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